

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01     PRETOR 04661 111507Z  
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PM-05 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10  
NSAE-00 INRE-00 SYE-00 MCT-02 SSO-00 /033 W  
-----046634 111535Z /40

O 111430Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO SECSTATE WASH DC IMMEDIATE 2073  
INFO AMCONGEN CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE  
AMCONGEN DURBAN IMMEDIATE  
AMCONGEN JOHANNESBURG IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4661

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAG: ASEC, PINS, SF  
SUBJ: SUSPECTED ARSON - PERSONAL AIRCRAFT - MAJOR RONALD L.  
GATEWOOD, ASST NAVAL ATTACHE - DAO - PRETORIA

1. SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE (SAP) REPORTED TO EMBASSY THIS MORNING  
THAT PRIVATE AIRCRAFT, BEEHCRAFT BONANZA, JOINTLY OWNED BY  
MAJOR RON GATEWOOD, DAO, PRETORIA, AND AMCIT ENGINEER AT  
SASOL II PROJECT WAS DISCOVERED BY GRAND CENTRAL AIRPORT  
MANAGER THIS MORING AS BURNED-OUT HULK.

2. PRELIMINARY POLICE INVESTIGATION POINT TO ARSON AS PLANE  
HAD BEEN MOVED FROM APRON TO TAXIWAY AT END OF RUNWAY AND  
COMMENT MADE BY FORENSIC EXPERT TO EMBOFF ON SCENE WAS THAT  
FUEL TANK APPEARED TO BE DELIVERATELY PENETRATED AND PLANE  
MOVED ABOUT 30 FT THEREBY UTILIZING GASOLINE AS TRAIN FOR  
IGNITING PLANE.

3. COMMANDING GENERAL, CID, SAP, AND COMMANDING GENERAL, CID  
CRIME LAB PERSONALLY DIRECTING INVESTIGATION AND WILL PROVIDE  
REPORTS TO EMBASSY.

4. PLANE WAS RECENTLY PURCHASED BY MAJOR GATEWOOD AND PARTNER  
AND IS SOUTH AFRICAN REGISTERED. PLANE WAS UTILIZED FOR  
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PERSONAL PLEASURE FLYING AND WAS CENTRAL TO INFORMAL EMBASSY  
FLYING CLUB. PLANE WAS WELL KNOWN BY AIR PORT PERSONNEL AS  
BELONGING TO AMERICANS.

5. GRAND CENTRAL AIRPORT IS CIVIL AIRPORT LOCATED HALFWAY  
BETWEEN PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG.  
EDMONDSON

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AIRCRAFT, ARSON  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978PRETOR04661  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780328-1214  
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**From:** PRETORIA  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
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**Office:** ACTION SY  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Date:** 07 jun 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1767593  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SUSPECTED ARSON - PERSONAL AIRCRAFT - MAJOR RONALD L. GATEWOOD, ASST NAVAL ATTACHE - DAO - PRETORIA  
**TAGS:** ASEC, PINS, SF  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/eccdf264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014